MARVEL COMICS

NOV
#22

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DEADPOOL®

CABLE®

GUEST-STARS

ON THE EVE OF

DEAD RECKONING

KELLY WILLIAMS LANNING

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RICEBO, NEW MEXICO, SITE OF THE S.E.T.I. RADIO TELESCOPE.

WHAT *CRITERIA* MUST A MAN FULFILL IN HIS *LIFETIME*...

...THAT HE MAY BE CALLED *"GREAT"* IN THE EYES OF HISTORY?

IS IT A MAN LIKE THE *FOOT SOLDIER?* THE *GRUNT* WHO DIVES HEADLONG INTO THE *BREACH*... PLANTS THE *FLAG* AT *IWO JIMA*... PULLS *BUDDIES* FROM *FOXHOLES*..?

OVERBOSS DIXON? NOAH HERE. WE'RE CLOSING IN ON *S.E.T.I.,* SIR...

THE OTHER DIMENSIONAL HOLDING FIRM OF LANDAU, LUCKMAN & LAKE. THE OFFICE OF OVERBOSS DIXON.

WHO IS THE JUDGE OF *"GREATNESS?"* WHO TRULY DESERVES THE TITLE?

OR IS IT THE *COMMANDER?* THE *GENERAL* WHO BARKS ORDERS... *DIVIDES* FLANKS... WHO JUGGLES *LIVES* AND PLAYS HIS SOLDIERS LIKE *CHESS PIECES*..?

REALLY? AND HERE I JUST THOUGHT YOU WERE TAKING MY TRANSPORT FOR A *JOY RIDE.* I DO HAVE *EYES,* NOAH.

YES, SIR.

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THE ENLISTED MAN DOESN'T KNOW WHAT *DEMONS* HE'LL FACE WHEN HE OPENS HIS *EYES* IN THE MORNING...HIS FATE IS DETERMINED BY *OTHERS*...

...AND YET...HE *FORGES* ONWARD WITHOUT *QUESTION*...

...DRIVEN BY *PRIDE*... AND OF COURSE, THE *QUEST*, THE PRIZE... THE *GRAIL*.

SIR, NO SIGN OF OUR FIRST *BLACK-OUT TEAM*, OR ANY *ANOMALIES* IN OUR PRELIMINARY SCAN OF THE SITE.

PRIORITY ONE, SHUT DOWN THAT DISH. UNTIL THE *MITHRAS DIRECTIVE* COMES TO FRUITION, NO ONE BUT *US* WATCHES THE STARS...

...IN SPITE OF THE...RECENT *UNPLEASANTNESS*...WITH *MONTY* AND *ZOE*, I MEAN©...WELL... I --

...THE WORLD IS *READY* FOR THE *MESSIAH*... BUT THEY'RE *NOT* READY TO KNOW HE'S ON HIS *WAY*.

AFTER YOU BLIND THE DISH, LOOK FOR *TEAM ONE*. BUT *NOT* BEFORE.

AFFIRMATIVE. CONSIDER OUR SECRET KEPT...BY THE WAY, SIR...I KNOW IT'S NOT EXACTLY PROTOCOL... BUT...

© WHICH WE'LL EXPLAIN IN JUST ONE PAGE, TRUE BELIEVER! -- MATT

—I'M SURE IT WASN'T ARBITRARY...YOU MUST HAVE HAD A REASON AND ⇒SIGH⇐ I'M TRYING TO SAY THAT YOU STILL HAVE MY CONFIDENCE...

...I KNOW YOU'LL DO THE RIGHT THING, AND I'M PROUD TO WORK UNDER YOU, SIR.

NOAH... I...

THE GENERAL KNOWS THE GOAL *INTIMATELY*...AND INSTEAD OF BEING DRIVEN *BY* IT, WORKS IN CONJUNCTION *WITH* IT...

LIKE AN *ARTIST* WHO PULLS A PAINTING *OUT* OF A CANVAS, THEY ARE *INEXTRICABLY INTERTWINED*... AND *NEITHER EXISTS* WITHOUT THE OTHER.

REPORT IN WHEN THE SITE IS *SECURE*, DIXON OUT.

THE ENLISTED MAN FLIES *BLIND*... THE GENERAL IS *ADDICTED*...

...SO WHO THEN... IS THE *GREATER MAN?*

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA... LAND OF BAYS, MALAISE...

...AND OUR HERO, HALF-CRAZED...

DON'T LOOK AT ME! DON'T YOU DARE LOOK!

DEADPOOL?

HE'S SOUSED... HOW CHARMING. FOR THIS, YOU KIDNAPPED ME FROM THE LAB?①

① SHE SURE DID. FOR REASONS WHICH WILL BE EXPLAINED IN JUST TWO PANELS, TRUE BELIEVER! --MATT

I'D RATHER JUST WATCH "CHEERS."

I'LL FORGIVE THE ATTITUDE BECAUSE YOU'VE BEEN TAMPERED WITH, *MONTY* -- BUT DON'T PUSH IT... WILSON!

GO AWAY! I'M NOT DECENT!

NOT *LISTENING*... NOT *LOOKING* -- I GOTTA FIND MY MASK... GOTTA PUT ON MY *FACE!*

I APOLOGIZE FOR THE INTRUSION, WILSON, BUT CULLODEN IS SUFFERING A DELUSION THAT I --

DIXON *ATTACKED* MONTY AND *MIND-WIPED* HIM, WILSON! I HAVE NO CLUE WHY, OR WHAT HE HOPED TO ACCOMPLISH① --

-- BUT THE MAN HAS CROSSED A *MAJOR LINE*, HERE! IF HE'S GONE OVER THE EDGE --

JUST MY LUCK... MOST DRUNKS GET *PINK ELEPHANTS*... I GET *PUNK SYCOPHANTS*... HABLO INGLES? I DON'T CARE!

① SO THAT'S WHY! FACE FORWARD, TRUE BELIEVER! --MATT

AW, TA *HECK* WITH IT.

TINKLE TINKLE TINKLE

WADE! WHAT IN THE *WHOO-HAH* YOU THINK YOU'RE DOIN' BLASTIN' *MELROSE* WHEN I'M TRYIN' TO SCORE SOME *BEAUTY REST?!*

TURN IT *DOWN* OUT HERE!

OOMP

POINK

GO BACK TO SLEEP, AL! YOU DON'T WANT NONE OF THIS!

HOLD ON... THAT AIN'T HEATHER LOCKLEAR...

WHOA!

WHOA

WILL YOU PLEASE SHUT YOUR SUCKYENT?!

IF DIXON HAS TURNED TRAITOR, THE ENTIRE MITHRAS DIRECTIVE IS THREATENED!

THAT MEANS THE MESSIAH DOESN'T TOUCH DOWN ON EARTH -- THERE IS NO GOLDEN AGE FOR HUMANITY -- AND ALL YOUR WORK TO BECOME THE HERALD OF THE MESSIAH MEANS JACK!

THERE ARE PEOPLE HERE?

OH BOY... THEY'RE DEAD.

AH... THE SWEET SOUND OF SILENCE... SIMON AND GARFIELD REALLY KNEW WHAT THEY WERE CROONING ABOUT...

WHOOF

ZOE!

YOU... YOU HIT ME --

GUESS, WHAT, YOU GOT OFF EASY... ASK AL -- UNINVITED GUESTS TO MY CRIB USUALLY END UP DECORATING MILK CARTONS.

SO REMEMBER THAT SPASM IN YOUR SOLAR PLEXUS NEXT TIME YOU DECIDE TO DROP IN WITHOUT CALLIN' FIRST.

-- WHERE ARE YOU GOING... W-WE HAVE TO TALK ABOUT DIXON --

NOT MY PROBLEM, KID. WHEN YOU NEED ME TO PLAY MITHRAS AND DO MY JOB, I'LL SLAP AROUND WHOEVER YOU PUT IN FRONT OF ME, BUT RIGHT NOW --

-- I'M OFF DUTY. AL... THROW SOME CHEEZE AND CRACKERS DOWN THEIR THROATS AND KICK 'EM OUT BEFORE I GET BACK.

-AHEM- WELL... UH... LIMBURGER OR FETA? COME ON, I AIN'T GOT ALL NIGHT... LENO'S ON.

Stan Lee presents

"DEAD RECKONING" minus ONE MONTH & COUNTING

GREAT MEN

ACROSS TOWN...IN A PRIVATE WAREHOUSE IN CHINA BASIN...

...THE KIDS ARE ALL RIGHT.

Joe Kelly First Man on the Moon
Anthony Williams Discovered Pencil-cilin
Andy Lanning Opened Capone's Inkwell
Matt Hicks Colored Hieroglyphics
RS & Comicraft/EM Carved the Rosetta Stone
Matt Idelson Corrected the Constitution
Bob Harras Knows Stan Personally

IN CONTRAST TO EVERYONE ELSE IN THIS STORY, THE YOUNG FAMILY OF MISFIT MUTANTS WHO LIVE HERE KNOWN AS X-FORCE...

...HAVE NO RESPONSIBILITIES TO SPEAK OF...AT LEAST FOR TONIGHT, ANYWAY.

INSTEAD, THEY CRASH HARD AFTER A MARATHON OF B-GRADE FLICKS, PIZZA, AND SUGAR BUZZ.

A DEAD SLEEP.

THE SLEEP OF THE INNOCENT.

HEY, THERESA... LONG TIME, NO STALK.

SORRY IT'S BEEN A WHILE... BUT YOU SEEMED PRETTY P.O.ED AT ME BACK IN IOWA... FIGURED YOU NEEDED SOME "SPACE".

I'M SENSITIVE LIKE THAT... WELL, THAT'S A LIE... BUT I KNOW CHICKS, AND CHICKS DIG "SPACE".

ANYWAY, I'M BACK... AND HOPING THAT I CAN ABSORB YOUR MORAL UPBRINGING THROUGH OSMOSIS AND FIGURE MY WAY OUT OF A TOUGH SPOT.

I'VE GOT THIS GIG WITH U&L... SOMETHING BIG THAT COULD REDIRECT THE COURSE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AWAY FROM TALK SHOWS AND CHRONIC OBESITY AND TOWARDS A GOLDEN AGE.

BUT TO DO THE JOB RIGHT... THEY WANT ME TO BE A KILLER.

WHILE THE REST OF THE WORLD CHARGES FORWARD, OL' WADE WILSON PLUMMETS BACK TO HIS DIRTY ROOTS.

ISSUE 912 -- MATT

THESE HANDS OF MINE... THEY'RE BLOODY... YOU KNOW IT, I KNOW IT, THE PENCIL PUSHERS AT MY HOUSE HIRED ME FOR IT...

BUT DOES THAT MEAN THEY ALWAYS HAVE TO BE THAT WAY?

I WANT TO DO THE RIGHT THING HERE... BUT TO DO THE RIGHT THING I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING BAD.

SO WHAT DO I DO? HOW DO I SATISFY DESTINY... AND KEEP MY HANDS CLEAN --?

FFFT

ASK A STUPID QUESTION...

OUTSIDE.

SIGH

GIVE ME A CALL SOMETIME, TERRY...

SMEK

WE'LL GRAB A SARSAPARILLA OR SOMETHING. TILL THEN...

...STAY GOOD... IT'S A LOT EASIER.

MEANWHILE... BACK AT DEADHUT CENTRAL...

THIS IS WRONG... ALL WRONG... HE CAN'T JUST RUN OFF LIKE THIS... I NEED --

YOU NEED TO TAKE A BREATH, SISTER, AND I NEED SOMEONE TO TELL ME WHO'S STANDIN' IN MY LIVING ROOM BEFORE I GET UPPITY.

YOU'RE SOME OF THOSE LL&L FOLKS, AREN'T YOU --?

-- I DON'T MEAN TO BE CURT, BUT YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR DEPTH, LADY. DO YOURSELF A FAVOR AND DON'T GET INVOLVED --

YOU'LL HAVE TO EXCUSE HER, MISS AL... MISS CULLODEN TENDS TO FORGET HER MANNERS IN A CRISIS... EVEN ONE OF HER OWN MAKING --

MONTGOMERY! YOU WERE MIND-WIPED! I --

-AHEM- MISS AL, I AM *MONTGOMERY, PRECOGNITIAN EXTRAORDINAIRE...* IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU IN PERSON.

-- WHAT'S WITH YOUR *HAND?*

I HAVE NO *SKIN.* THANK YOU FOR *NOTICING.*

THAT'S MIGHTY *WHITE* OF YOU, *MONTY...* IT'S NICE TO MEET A FRIEND OF *WADE'S* WITH SOME *CLASS* --

THIS IS *ABSURD.* I CAME HERE TO SAVE THE WORLD, NOT TO ARGUE ETIQUETTE WITH DEADPOOL'S HOUSEMAID --

THIS ENDS NOW.

TAKE CARE, AL. IN *ONE SECOND,* YOU WON'T EVEN REMEMBER WE WERE HERE.

ZOE, WAIT --

BEAT

WHY NOT? YOU GONNA SLIP ME A *MICKEY?*

TRY IT AND I'LL *SOCK* YOU ONE!

AL. BLIND. DUH. AND COULD YOU BE SLIGHTLY *MORE* OF A HYPOCRITE, ZOE?

CONTRARY TO THE SPIN OF *HISTORY BOOKS*, THE GREAT MEN OF *ANTIQUITY* WERE MOST OFTEN *DESPISED* AND FEARED DURING THEIR RISE TO *"GLORY."*

SEE?

WONDER WHO'S ON THE *CHOPPING* BLOCK?

JUST DON'T *LOOK* AT HIM...

THIS IS DUE TO THE FACT THAT BY THEIR VERY *NATURE*, GREAT MEN MUST BE *FALSE MEN*. GREAT MEN *NEVER* REVEAL THEMSELVES --

-- ESPECIALLY GREAT MEN WITH *UNDERLINGS*.

UH... O-O-OVERBOSS, D-D-D—

FROM THE *MAIN OFFICE*, S-SIR --

THEY MUST PROJECT *ONE IMAGE*... WHILE *STRANGLING* THEIR *TRUE* FEELINGS INTO OBLIVION.

...RIGHT. SHOULDN'T YOU *BE* SOMEWHERE?

YES... TH-*THANK* YOU... YES-S-*SOMEWHERE*...

THIS *DUALITY* OFT TIMES MAKES THEM *UNPOPULAR* AND *DISTRUSTED* BY THE *ENLISTEDS*...

...WHO UNDERSTAND AND *THRIVE* ON THE LANGUAGE OF *TRUTH*. *LAUGHTER*. SCREAMS. *TEARS* SHED AT WILL.

FSASHH

TRUTH IS THE ENLISTED MAN'S *GREATEST WEAPON*. YET THE *GENERAL CONQUERS* THROUGH HALF-TRUTH AND *FALSEHOOD*.

WHO THEN, IS THE *GREATER MAN?*

DIXON:
We are proud to approve your recommendation that Noah DuBois be rolled in the Overboss ng Program. He is mising candidate ppointment romotion

AN INDUSTRIAL CORNER OF SAN FRAN...

WHERE CABLE CARS GO TO DIE.

I WASN'T GONNA DO ANYTHING... TERRY AND I ARE OL' PALS --

I DON'T CARE.

YOU DON'T GO NEAR THOSE KIDS. EVER.

ARE WE CRYSTAL?

. . .

DO YOU PRACTICE THAT CHARLTON HESTON VOICE, CABLE, OR IS IT NATURAL? 'CAUSE IT'S GOTTA BE A RIOT AT REPUBLICAN FUND-RAISERS.

SUPER BREW

HEY! SAY "THE NRA IS ABOUT LIBERTY, NOT KILLING RABBITS WITH AK-47'S"...

... 'SIDES, WHAT'S IT TO YOU IF I VISIT? I THOUGHT YOU GAVE UP PLAYING DEN MOTHER TO THE X-FORCE TROOP.

VERMIN? EXCUSE ME? I'M NOT THE EX-SURROGATE DAD WHO LIKES TO SNEAK IN AND LEER AT A BUNCH OF SLEEPING KIDS...

I DID. BUT I...CHECK IN ON THEM SOMETIMES... TO MAKE SURE THEY AREN'T SET UPON BY VERMIN LIKE YOU.

WHAT'S WRONG, DOMINO GETTING A LITTLE LONG IN THE TOOTH FOR YOU? PREFER 'EM A LITTLE YOUNGER, GUV'NOR? NUDGE NUDGE.

YOU DEGENERATE PIECE OF FILTH...

SHUT THAT TRASH MOUTH OF YOURS BEFORE I SHUT IT FOR YOU...

QURMM

SCHRBB

...PERMANENTLY.

LOVE TO, NATE, BUT IT'S THIS PESKY [redacted]ACTER FLAW OF MINE... IT'S COMPULSIVE...

JUST LIKE WHEN YOU CAN'T PULL YOURSELF AWAY FROM THE PEEPHOLE INTO BOOM BOOM'S SHOWER WHEN SHE'S USING THE WATER MASSAGE...

OOPSIE... THERE I GO AGAIN. I AM SICK... WILL YOU HELP ME TAKE MY MEDICINE?

WITH PLEASURE!

RRNGHH!

"RRNGHH?" WE HAVEN'T STARTED YET AND YOU'RE WINDED? I HOPE YOU'D HAVE THE COMMON DECENCY TO TELL ME IF YOU'RE SUFFERING SEVERE CHEST PAINS...

IT'D BE A TOTAL TEASE IF YOU DROPPED DEAD BEFORE I GOT A CHANCE TO SMACK THE PEPSI OUT OF YOU!

TELL YOU WHAT... STAY WITH US FOR A FEW [redacted] AND I'LL MAKE IT SNAPPY... I [redacted] BIGGER FISH FRY ANYHOW --

IN CASE YOU DIDN'T GET THE *SPAM*, I'M WORKING TOWARDS A *"HIGHER PURPOSE"* THESE DAYS --

SNIFF

RIGHT.

KRACK

NO JOKE! IT'S BIG FAT *DESTINY*, *BABY!*

WHAT COULD *YOU* KNOW ABOUT *DESTIN* --

KRACK

SCRAPP

JUST *THIS*, POINDEXTER... SHE'S SMILING ON *MY* SORRY BACKSIDE *TONIGHT*.

BECAUSE SHE SENT *YOU* TO ME *POWERLESS* AS A *SUPERDUDE* ON A *KRYPTONITE* FARM.

WHAT?

THE S.E.T.I. RADIO TELESCOPE, AT ARICEBO, MEXICO...

THIS WAS THE *ENTRY* POINT FOR THE *LAST* BLACKOUT TEAM...

RETRACE THEIR STEPS, *FIND* THEM, AND THEN NAIL THE *RECEIVER ARRAY.*

WHAT ARE WE "*BLACKING OUT*" THE ARRAY *FROM?*

THAT'S *CLASSIFIED*, HARDING... JUST BELIEVE ME WHEN I TELL YOU...

IT'S VERY *BIG*... AND VERY *GOOD.*

HISTORY IS *BUILT* [redacted] THE *BONES* OF THE ENLISTED MAN.

[redacted] IS THE *MORTAR* THAT *BINDS* HISTORY TOGETHER. *NAMELESS*...

...UNLESS *FATE* CHOOSES TO IMMORTALIZE HIM, EITHER BY ELEVATING HIM TO "*GREATNESS*" IN THE HISTORY BOOKS...

...OR ADORNING THICK [redacted] OF POLISHED MARBLE.

HISTORY IS A PROCESS OF *ELIMINATION.*

HOLD ON, TEAM...

...THAT *DEBRIS* UP AHEAD... SOMETHING ABOUT IT *REGISTERING* --

--*ORGANIC*..? BUT THERE SHOULDN'T [redacted] ANY --

...

NO ONE MOVE.

WE'RE IN *TROUBLE.*

"*GREAT MEN*" ARE JUST *LUCKY* ENOUGH TO SURVIVE THE *CUT.*

KAKKRIEFF

NO... IT'S TOO SOON...

WHAT IS IT?!

Oh MY GOD!

BIG --

IN THE CASE OF THE *GENERAL*, THE *COMMANDER*, THE *OVERBOSS*...

SHUK

TIGHT *FOCUS!* DO *NOT* PANIC! KEEP -- *NO!*

...GREATNESS DOES *NOT* COME BECAUSE HE PUTS HIS *LIFE* ON THE LINE FOR HIS *FELLOW MAN*...

DIXON! DIXON, COME IN! *DO NOT* COME HERE! I REPEAT, DO *NOT!*

...IT DOES *NOT* COME BECAUSE [redacted] SEES *FRIENDS* AND [redacted] DIE AND KEEPS *FIGHTING* THE *GOOD FIGHT*...

GREATNESS FOR THE *LEADER* COMES...

IT'S HERE, DIXON! IT'S *HERE* -- AGGH!

...BECAUSE HE SITS IN AN OVERSTUFFED ITALIAN LEATHER CHAIR [redacted] *MILLION MILES* AWAY FROM THE *WAR FRONT*...

...MAKING *GREAT* DECISIONS SOMEWHERE SAFE.

ALONE... WITH HIS GREAT DREAMS.

SAN FRAN.

IT'S ELEMENTARY, PLOTZSON! IF YOU STILL HAD THE SYNAPTIC SUPER-STUFF --

-- YOU WOULD HAVE MIND-SHOCKED ME AT THE APARTMENT AND SENT ME HOME FED-EX BEFORE I COULD SAY BOO!

BUT YOU DIDN'T, WHICH MEANS IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS --

THE CABLE'S OUT!

SCHRAKK

RARGH!

THAT'S ABOUT THE BEST NEWS I'VE HEARD THIS [redacted]E...

... 'CAUSE BETWEEN YOU AND ME, SNOW TOP... THIS MAN OF DESTINY GIG AIN'T ALL IT'S [redacted] UP TO BE -- THE [redacted] LIED.

WAS HOPING... HE WOULDN'T NOTICE... MY TELEPATHIC AND TELEKINETIC POWERS HAVE GONE BUST...

[redacted] BOOK YOU SHOULD CHECK OUT? -- MATT

HAVE TO USE WHAT LITTLE TK I HAVE LEFT... TO KEEP... TECHNO-VIRUS THAT POISONS MY BODY IN CHECK...

-HFF- WH-WHAT [redacted] YOU BABBLING ABOUT, WILSON?!

SQURBL

MUST KEEP HIM TALKING... LONG ENOUGH TO FOCUS --

I'M GLAD YOU ASKED, SON! SOON AS YOU STOP THAT ANNOYING WHEEZING, I'LL TELL YOU A STORY...

TALKING. DEADPOOL. DUH.

THIS WIDDLE PIDDY IS THE *MESSIAH*, AN' HE'S ON HIS WAY TO *EARTH*...

DIS WIDDLE PIDDY IS *TIAMAT* WHO'S OUT TO OUT *ICE* AFOREMENTIONED PIDDY 'A'...

... AND *DIS* WIDDLE PIDDY IS *DEADPOOL!* CHOSEN TO *SAFEGUARD* THE MESSIAH BY *DESTINY* AND A BUNCH OF *CORPORATE-HIPPIE STAR-WATCHERS* WHO THINK I'M GONNA SAVE THE *WORLD*.

YOUR STAR-WATCHERS OUGHT TO *POLISH* THEIR *TELESCOPES* —

SCHRAK

WHAT THE —

THEY'VE GOT THE *WRONG MAN.*

FWIT

TRUST ME ON THIS ONE, WILSON. I KNOW A THING OR TWO ABOUT *"DESTINY."*

A LIFE LIVED IN PREPARATION FOR A *SINGULAR* PURPOSE IS A LIFE OF [redacted] *DISCIPLINE.* *ULTIMATE* SACRIFICE --

-- IT'S *NOT* THE LIFE OF A PSYCHOTIC *MONSTER* WITH A *BAD MOUTH.*

YOU *STUCK UP* SON OF A *MUTANT* --

-- I AM *NOT* A *MONSTER!* THIS IS MY SHOT TO DO SOMETHING *RIGHT!*

MY *LAST CHANCE* TO BE A HE--

MY *FACE.*

WHERE DO YOU GET OFF CALLING ME A *HYPOCRITE*?! HAS EVERYONE BUT ME GONE MAD?!

ZOE, PLEASE... YOU'RE NOT *LISTENING* --

NONE OF THIS IS GOING AS IT SHOULD! DEADPOOL IS NOT PERFORMING UP TO *SPEC*! DIXON HAS GONE *SECTION EIGHT*, AND NOW *YOU* TURN ON ME.

YOU WANNA KNOW *WHY* ALL YOUR BEST LAID PLANS ARE FALLING IN THE *EAST RIVER*, KID? ALLOW ME

...YOU TREAT PEOPLE LIKE THEY'RE *GARBAGE*, ZOE! BUT YOU GOT YER *HEAD* TOO FAR UP YOUR *LEOTARD* TO SEE IT!

YOU PEOPLE HAVE BEEN TELLING WADE FOR *MONTHS* THAT HE'S GOTTA *CLEAN UP* HIS ACT AND PREPARE TO BE SOME KIND OF *GREAT MAN* IN HISTORY.

BUT YER *SHOCKED* WHEN YOU LAY IT ON HIM THAT HE'S GOTTA WHACK SOMEONE TO DO IT AND HE *FLIPS OUT!* CAN YOU SAY *MIXED MESSAGES*?!

SHE *DOES* CARRY A *POINT* --

SPEAK AND *DIE*, MONTY... THIS ISN'T ABOUT WADE, AL... THIS IS ABOUT --

THIS IS ABOUT TREATING PEOPLE LIKE PEOPLE! YOU'RE ALL A TIZZY BECAUSE DIXON WIPED YOUR KENTUCKY FRIED PAL HERE -- BUT I DON'T HEAR YOU WINNING ANY HUMANITARIAN AWARDS EITHER! HOW 'BOUT YOU *STOP* BARKING ORDERS AN' START ACTING LIKE A MEMBER OF THE *HUMAN RACE*?!

REALLY..?

SO I SHOULD *FORGET* THAT PART WHERE YOU WERE GONNA *ZAP* ME WITH YER *WHOOSIE WHATSIS* THE [redacted] WAY MONTY GOT ZAPPED BY DIXON?

-- I... BUT -- THAT... THAT *WAS* HYPOCRITICAL OF ME... WASN'T IT...

SAY *HALLELUJAH*, BOYS! SHE'S HAD A *BREAK-THROUGH!*

MULTIPLY THAT FEELING BY A *THOUSAND*, AND *MAYBE* YOU'LL SEE HOW WADE FEELS.

YOU... YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO TALK TO ME LIKE THAT... I DO *NOT* CONDUCT MYSELF LIKE *DIX[redacted]* --

OKAY, TIME OUT! CAR! CAAAAR!

HELMET OFF ON THE FIELD! I GOTTA TAKE A SISSY BREAK!

DESTINY WAITS FOR NO MAN, DEADPOOL! FOR NOTHING!

KR-SHK!

WHEN YOU HAVE A PURPOSE [redacted] LIFE, YOU CAN'T JUST PUT IT ON HOLD BECAUSE YOU'RE HAVING A [redacted]

IT'S WITH YOU ALWAYS! EVERY WAKING MOMENT!

YOU CAN'T HIDE DEEP ENOUGH. YOU CAN'T RUN FAR ENOUGH... YOU CAN'T EVEN TRY --

BECAUSE THE GUILT ALONE WOULD EAT YOU ALIVE!

LOOK, THIS IS OBVIOUSLY A SORE TOPIC FOR YOU... BUT COULD YOU COOL IT --?

DO YOU HAVE ANY [redacted] WHAT IT'S LIKE LIVING [redacted]TH THAT KIND OF RESPONSIBILITY?! DO YOU, PUNK?!

YES! I DO! AND IT ROTS, CABLE!

IT ROTS!

WELL I BET IT DOESN'T ROT HALF AS MUCH AS DYING BEFORE YOUR SHOT COMES!

I MAY JUST BE SHOOTING IN THE *DARK* HERE... BUT WHAT THE HEY, WE'RE *BLOOD ENEMIES*...

ARE YOU *DYING*, CABLE?

I DON'T BELIEVE IN *"DESTINY"*, WILSON... DON'T BELIEVE IN *"FATE"*... THEY'RE JUST *WORDS*...

...BUT I *DO* BELIEVE THAT EVERYONE HAS A *PURPOSE*... A *NOBLE* ONE... AND THERE'S NO GREATER HONOR THAN *FULFILLING* THAT ROLE.

BUT [redacted] WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF ALL OF A SUD[redacted]... YOU LOST THE *TOOLS*... THE *WEAPONS* THAT ALLOWED YOU TO DO YOUR JOB *EFFECTIVELY*...

IMAGINE IF ALL THE *SACRIFICES* YOU'D MADE... THE *PAIN* YOU'D ENDURED... WAS FOR *NOTHING*...

...BECAUSE YOU WERE GOING TO *DROP DEAD* BEFORE YOU CAUGHT SIGHT OF THE *FINISH LINE*.

MY HEART *BLEEDS*, CABLE, *REALLY*... BUT IF YOU KICKED *TOMORROW*...

AT LEAST YOU KNOW YOU WERE ONE OF THE *GOOD ONES*, A FAT HEADED *JERK*...

...BUT YOU COULDA BEEN A GRADE "A" BONA FIDE *CONTENDER*... LIVING LEGEND. *ME?*

DESTINY DOESN'T CARE THAT I'VE MADE *SACRIFICES* TO GET HERE... THAT I'VE SAID MY *PRAYERS* AND *BRUSHED* AFTER MEALS...

...DESTINY WANTS A *GARBAGE MAN*, AND I'M IT... I'M *ALWAYS* IT.

BANG *BANG*. I'M *DEADPOOL*. YOU'RE *DEAD*.

...

[redacted] ONE THANKS THE GARBAGE MEN, WILSON... IT'S PART OF THE JOB...

BUT EVERYONE STILL NEEDS US. WITHOUT US...

THE WORLD DROWNS.

IT'S THAT SIMPLE FOR YOU... ISN'T IT?

ALL THE SACRIFICES... THE HURT... SO LONG AS YOU HAVE YOUR EYES ON THE PRIZE, IT MAKES SENSE...

...BUT NO OFFENSE... IT SOUNDS TO ME LIKE YOU GOT SHAFTED.

YOU KEPT YOUR NOSE CLEAN... FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT, BUT YOU'RE GONNA GET YOUR TICKET PUNCHED BEFORE YOU MAKE IT TO THE GRAND FINALE.

I MEAN, FOR GOD'S SAKE... EVEN GARBAGE MEN GET A GOLD WATCH WHEN THEY RETIRE... YOU DON'T GET SQUAT.

DOESN'T THAT MEAN YOUR WHOLE LIFE HAS BEEN A WASTE?

MAYBE...

NO. *NOT TRYING*... *LETTING* THE TRASH PILE UP...

THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN A WASTE OF MY LIFE.

I *LIVED*, WILSON... LIKE *FEW* MEN ARE GIVEN THE *OPPORTUNITY* TO...

...AND I'M FINALLY STARTING TO REALIZE WHAT A GOOD LIFE IT'S BEEN.

YOU *SICK MONKEY*... I JUST DON'T *GET* YOU... HOW CAN YOU NOT FEEL *SHAFTED* --?

NO TIME... I GOT A *JOB* TO DO...

I AIN'T DEAD *YET*... AND THE TRASH *STILL* NEEDS TO BE PICKED UP.

WAIT, THAT'S *IT*? YOU'RE JUST GONNA GO *YODA* ON ME AND WALK OFF INTO THE *NIGHT*? WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A CIVILIZED *BRAWL* HERE!

FIGHT'S *OVER*. I'M *PRIORITIZING* AND YOU'RE NOT THAT *IMPORTANT* TO ME RIGHT NOW.

IF YOU REALLY *DO* HAVE A SHOT AT BRINGING SOME *WORTH* TO THAT *LIFE* OF YOURS...

...I SUGGEST *YOU* DO THE *SAME*.

TRUST ME... YOU DON'T WANT TO *WASTE* ANYMORE *TIME*.

YEAH, WELL -- I GUESS SUDDENLY I DON'T FEEL LIKE TEARING *YOU* A NEW *ORIFICE* EITHER...

...OF *COURSE*... YOU GO NEAR THOSE *KIDS* AGAIN... OR I FIND OUT YOU'RE FEEDING ME A LINE ABOUT YOUR *"DESTINY"*...

...I PROMISE, YOU'LL HURT *BAD*.

RIGHT, OLD MAN... TRY TO LIVE *LONG* ENOUGH FOR ME TO *WHACK* YOU, WOULD YA?

SURE... YOU, *TOO*.

LATER... LL&L... DIXON'S OFFICE.

MAYBE *NOW* WE CAN GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS.

MONTY... WHATEVER HAPPENS HERE... I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW --

-- I -- I'M SORRY... IF I'VE BEEN TREATING YOU... AS ANYTHING LESS THAN HUMAN.

SOMETIMES MY FOCUS IS SO NARROW... I CAN'T SEE WHAT'S AROUND ME.

AWWW, ISN'T THIS *ONE TO GROW ON?!*

FWAT

ARE YOU CRAZY, ZANY KIDS HAVING A *MOMENT* BEFORE YOU BUST OPEN A CAN O'*WHUPPIN'?*

IT WARMS THE *COCKLES* OF MY HEART TO SEE YOU TRYING TO FOLLOW IN *UNCA WADE'S* FOOTSTEPS...

...BUT YOU'D BETTER SLOW DOWN BEFORE YOU *PULL* SOMETHING.

DEADPOOL?!

YOU WANNA SCARE A *GIRL SCOUT*, DO IT *YOURSELF*...

...YOU WANT TO SEE A GROWN MAN *CRY* LIKE HE'S JUST SEEN BEA ARTHUR *NAKED..?*

YOU LEAVE IT TO *ME.*

OVER OUR *STAGE FRIGHT*, ARE WE?

LOOK... LET'S JUST CALL THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE BACK AT THE HUT A *COMICAL MIX-UP*, AND LEAVE IT AT *THAT.*

GOOD ENOUGH. LET'S BREAK THAT MAN IN *TWO.*

BEND OVER AN GRAB YOUR ANKLES, DICKEY-BOY —!

CAUSE I GOT A GIANT-SIZED PADDLE'O CONFESSION WITH YOUR NAME ON IT, AND I'M COMIN' IN SWINGIN'!

WHO THEN, IS THE GREATER MAN?

IS HE THE ONE WHO STANDS BY HIS COMRADES IN THE FACE OF INJUSTICE? THE ONE WHO EMBRACES HIS DESTINY IN SPITE OF FEAR?

UH... IS HE ASLEEP? I CALLED HIM "DICKEY BOY" AND HE DIDN'T FLINCH...

I SENSE A... A COLDNESS... SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED...

DIXON?

OR THE ONE WHO FEEDS THE GREATER GOOD WITH THE BLOOD OF FRIENDS...

YOU COULDN'T BE MORE CORRECT, MONTY...

...THE ONE WHO KEEPS THE MACHINE FUELED WITH BODIES TO GRIND AND LIVES TO EAT..?

HISTORY WILL PROVIDE IT'S OWN VERSION OF AN ANSWER... BUT I HAVE A THEORY...

NOAH...

THERE ARE NO GREAT MEN. NEVER WERE.

JUST WELL INTENTIONED FOOLS, MEN WITH LUCK...

...AND MONSTERS LIKE ME.

...NOAH IS DEAD.

H.X.E.
DEADRECKONING

DEADLINES

PAUL TUTRONE
ASSISTANT EDITOR

MATT IDELSON
EDITOR

BOB HARRAS
CHIEF

Dear *Deadlines*,

I just finished DEADPOOL #19 and thought it was fantastic. The reason for my letter, though, and I don't know if it's in Mr. Kelly's plans or not, but could you make Ilaney Brükner a continuing character in this title? In this issue we learned a little bit about her whereas before she was just along for the ride. I'd really like to see how the relationship between her and Wade plays out because she doesn't know about him like the rest of the characters in the book do.

That said, is there any chance of Mr. Kelly teaming up with Mr. Busiek for a storyline or ten? It'd be bigger than Jason Priestly's sideburns. Congratulate the team on a great book; it keeps getting closer to the top of my reading pile with each issue.

Until Wade starts hanging out with Buzz at the Daily Grind, make mine Marvel.

Lucas Faulkner
Mudgeeraba, Qld.
Australia

Thanks, Lucas! As far as we can see, Ilaney is on her own. It's not that we didn't like her or anything, but Deadpool's got a lotta stuff on his plate right now, and none of it takes place in the Alps. We've gotten a lotta letters about the Swiss miss, though, and almost all of them positive. Ya never know...

As far as a Joe Kelly/ Kurt Busiek team-up goes, there's nothing in the works right now. And if you think anything could possibly be any bigger than Jason Priestly's sideburns, well...

Dear *Deadlines*,

I have been a reader of DEADPOOL since issue #11 (a classic!). After that, it's been the only comic I read! I'm really kicking myself for missing issues # 13 and 19 (which with my luck, were probably the best!).

Here are a few questions I hope you can answer. What's that thing on T-Ray's nose? Will we ever see Weasel and Deuce again? Is Deadpool a mutant (just kidding)?

But the point to my letter is that this is a really good comic and I hope you guys keep up the good work! So, until Wade dies at the hands... er, paws... of the woodchuck and his buck-toothed family during the explodey-head guy's limited series, make mine Marvel!

Jonathan Brinson
Somerset, KY

We're sorry to say, Jonathan, that issues 13 and 19 were, in fact, the best issues to date. Commence kickage, bud. Ha ha! Just kidding! All the DEADPOOL issues are equally stupendous!

Now, let's see if we can't answer those questions of yours, eh? That thing on T-Ray's nose looks like a Band-Aid to us. We're too scared to ask. Okay, get ready for this... the next time you get to see Weasel is... drum roll, por favor... the next time you pick up a back issue in which he appeared! Yayyyyyy!! And Deuce appears every so often in the headshot section of our gatefold, so be sure to check for him there! Seriously, though, we plan on bringing them back. You must learn patience, young Jedi.

And finally, did you really think that last question was funny? Do you know how much energy we've devoted to reminding people that Deadpool is not a mutant?! Do you?! Hmph. Expect a visit from a certain Band-Aid nosed, pasty-faced, magic-wielding merc.

Okay, actually, since you suggested that great limited series, we'll call him off. Thanks, dude!

Okay, everybody look out for that big bad Statement of Ownership, cuz here it comes!

NEXT ISSUE:
DEAD RECKONING IS A'COMIN', LADIES AND GENTS! SINCE ISSUE #1, WE'VE SEEN ZOE GUIDING DEADPOOL TOWARDS HIS ULTIMATE DESTINY AS THE HERALD FOR THE GALACTIC MESSIAH! WELL, HE/SHE/IT IS ALMOST HERE, WHETHER THE 'POOLMAN'S READY OR NOT! THIS STORY'S SO BIG, IT'S TAKING US THREE ISSUES TO TELL, TWO OF WHICH ARE DOUBLE-SIZED, STARTING WITH NEXT ISH! GET READY, FOLKS. NO ONE EVER SAID DEADPOOL'S JOB WAS GONNA BE EASY... OR SURVIVABLE! SEE YA!

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